

Spring 1-15-1999

## ENG 3009C-003: Myth and Culture

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*Eastern Illinois University*

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**English 3009-003: Myth and Culture**  
Spring 1999 (TR-9:30-10:45)

Professor: Jyoti Panjwani  
Office: Ch 316A  
Phone: 581-3615  
Office Hours: TR 12:15-1:15 and by appointment

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MR

**Course Description:**

This course will involve an in-depth look at the myths and culture of **three Asian** countries, namely, **India, China, and Japan**. In the Indian segment, we will read the **Hindu** and the **Buddhist** (the **Hinayana** or the Theravada) myths. The study of Hinduism will include (i) **Vedic** (Early and Later) Mythology, (ii) the **Puranic** (The Ramayana and The Mahabharata) Mythology, (iii) **Krishna** Mythology, and (iv) **Shiva** Mythology. The Chinese segment will include the study of **Confucianism, Taoism** and **Mahayana** (or Pureland) **Buddhism**. Finally, the Japanese segment will focus on **Zen Buddhism, Shinto** and **Ainu** Mythologies.

The primary orientation of this study will be to develop a clear understanding of (a) **philosophical** and **religious interpretations** of the concepts of creation/origin of the world, death, divinity, fate, the ultimate goal/s of human life, etc., and (b) **social systems** and **moral/ethical values** of these cultures. Whenever possible, we will also compare the commonalties and differences among these three Asian cultures and mythologies.

**Course Requirements:**

Active preparation and class-participation - 10%  
Mid-term exam - 30%  
Final Exam - 30%  
One research paper, 4-6 pages - 30%

**Texts Required:**

Ananda Coomaraswamy and Sister Nivedita. Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists.  
Rajeshwari Pandharipande. The Eternal Self and the Cycle of Samsara.  
Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood (Trans.). The Song Of God: Bhagavad-Gita

**Course Policies:**

Discussion (participation) is an important component of this course. Your presence in class is important for everyone, but especially for you. Each unexcused absence will bring your final grade down by 1%. Three late appearances equal one unexcused absence.

Papers are due at the beginning of the class on the day they are due. For each day that the paper is late, the letter grade will fall by one full grade: an 'A' essay due on Friday will be a 'F' by next Thursday. **ALWAYS MAKE COPIES AND BACK UP YOUR WORK!**

**Plagiarism Policy** (English Department)

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism -- "The appropriation or imitation of the language, of ideas, and/or thoughts of another author and representation of them as one's own original work" (Random House Dictionary of the English Language) -- has the right and responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

## **Information for Students with Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Co-ordinator of the office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

### **Tentative Syllabus.**

#### **Week 1**

1/12- Introduction to the Course

1/14- Myth: Definition, form, content and function (Chapter-1, from R.P.), Indus Valley Civilization (Chapter-2 from R.P)

#### **Week 2**

1/19- Aryan Ideology and Early Vedic Mythology (Chapter-3, R.P.)

1/21- Creation myths from the Rig Veda, Introduction to the Later Vedic Literature (Chapter-3, R.P)

#### **Week 3**

1/26- Ramayana (Chapter-2 from Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists, Chapter-4 from R.P.)

1/28- Ramayana (continued)

#### **Week 4**

2/2- Mahabharata (Chapter- 3 from Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists, and Chapter-5 from R.P.)

2/4- Mahabharata (continued)

#### **Week 5**

2/9- Mahabharata (continued)

2/11- Bhagavad-Gita (Chapter-6 from R.P.)

#### **Week 6**

2/16- Bhagavad-Gita (continued)

2/18- Krishna myths (Chapter-4 from The Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists, and Chapter-7 from R.P.)

#### **Week 7**

2/23- continued

2/25- Shiva myths (Chapter-6 from The Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists, and chapter-8 from R.P.)

#### **Week 8**

3/2- Review for mid-term exam

3/4- Mid-term exam

#### **Week 9**

3/9- Introduction to Buddhism, Buddhist myths (Chapter-5 from The Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists, chapter-9 from R.P)

3/11- continued

**Week 10**

3/23- continued

3/25- Chinese mythology, Confucianism (Chapter-10 from R.P.)

**Week 11**

3/30- continued

4/1- Taoism (Chapter-11 from R.P.)

**Week 12**

4/6- continued

4/8- Japanese mythology, Zen Buddhism (Chapter-12 from R.P.)

**Week 13**

4/13- continued

4/15- Shinto mythology (Chapter- 13 from R.P)

**Week 14**

4/20- continued

4/22- Ainu mythology (Chapter-13 from R.P.), Paper due at the beginning of the class

**Week 15**

4/27- Comparative Mythology

4/29- Review for the Final Exam